OPEN Doors

A publication of the Residential Tenancies Branch

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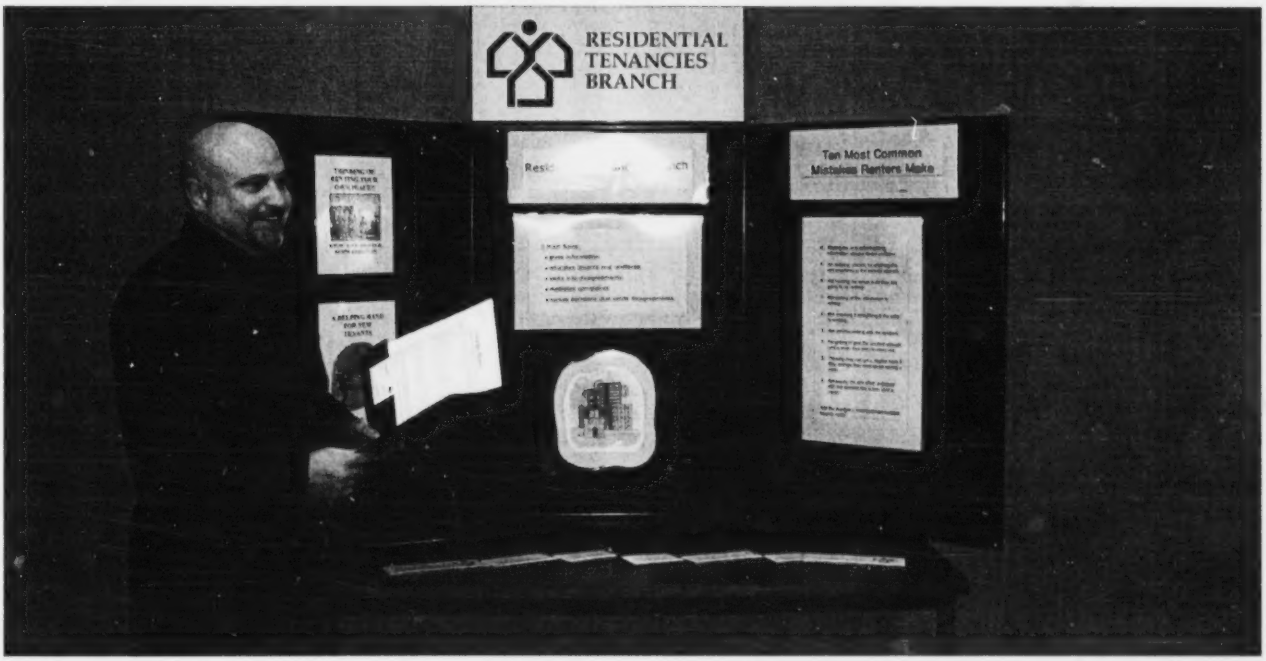


The Residential Tenancies Branch has staff available to speak at public events or provide educational sessions. These sessions are offered on specific topics for landlords, tenants, students, seniors and community groups.

Session topics include:

- knowing your rights and responsibilities as a tenant
- knowing your rights and responsibilities as a landlord
- how the Residential Tenancies Branch can help you
- what you should know before you rent
- what you should know while you rent
- information about rent increases
- information about unit-by-unit rehabilitation
- tenancy agreements
- security deposits

The branch will also provide booths and branch staff to provide public information at relevant trade shows and conferences.

Branch staff usually need three or four weeks advance notice to provide groups with the appropriate speaker. To request a speaker from the Residential Tenancies Branch, you can call the branch; complete the Request for Speaker Form online at **manitoba.ca/rtb**; or print the form and mail or fax it to:

Speaker's Program Administrator
Residential Tenancies Branch
302-254 Edmonton Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3Y4
Phone: 945-2476 in Winnipeg
Toll free: 1-800-782-8403
Fax: 204-945-6273

To subscribe to Open Doors, give us your comments, or get more information, call 945-2476 in Winnipeg, toll free 1-800-782-8403 or visit **manitoba.ca/rtb**

Reducing Condensation on Windows

Condensation on the inside of windows, especially during the winter, can cause problems. Both landlords and tenants can help reduce condensation which lowers visibility and the quality of natural light in a room as well as creating water rings, stains, peeling paint and mold.

Condensation occurs when the surface temperature of window glass, sashes and frames is lower than the humid air next to it. Natural moisture in the air, in the form of vapour, changes into water when it comes in contact with cold surfaces. The result is droplets of water that run down the glass when the humidity in the air is heavy or doesn't evaporate fast enough. Condensation often occurs at the edge of glazed windows and can be reduced or eliminated by raising the inside surface temperature and/or reducing the humidity of the air in the room.

To reduce condensation, make sure your interior window coverings (curtains, blinds, valances, etc.) don't stop the flow of air along the surface of the window. Blocking the air flow will hold humidity closer to the windows. Regular household

activities like showering, bathing, doing laundry and cooking can all add humidity to the air. Regular, efficient air exchange in the heating/cooling system can keep that humidity at a minimum.

Try not to produce too much humidity. Plants, long showers and cooking without lids are major sources of water vapour. If possible, avoid hanging laundry inside to dry.

If condensation on the windows continues, the ventilation in the building may have to be increased. When condensation occurs occasionally (once or twice during the winter), you can reduce or eliminate it by turning on the kitchen or bathroom exhaust fans.

DID YOU KNOW?

A landlord **is** responsible for:

- clearing snow from the sidewalks and stairs in a multi-unit residential complex, except in areas where tenants have exclusive use of the area
- clearing snow in multi-unit complexes, when necessary, to give tenants access to their parking stalls

A landlord **is not** responsible for:

- removing snow from individual parking stalls, unless the tenant and landlord have an agreement that the landlord will provide this service

Prevent House and Apartment Fires

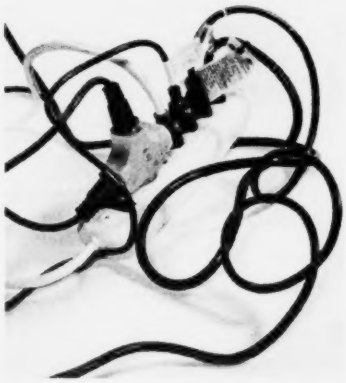
Landlords and tenants both need to be vigilant about fire prevention. Paying attention to possible fire hazards can not only protect property, it also protects lives. Here are some basic fire prevention tips.

Electrical fires

Electrical fires are dangerous and costly. To avoid them:

- Make sure all the wiring in homes and apartment blocks are professionally installed and meet standard safety codes.
- Use all electrical equipment safely and properly, and be aware of the dangers of electricity.
- Don't overload electrical outlets with too many plugs.
- Make sure all electrical cords are in good working condition.
- Keep cords clear of obstacles (ex: don't run cords under carpets or furniture because they may get damaged and spark a fire.)
- Don't let cords become overheated, frayed or damaged, or they could start a fire.
- Keep smoke detectors and fire extinguishers in appropriate places and in good working condition.
- If a fire does break out, call 911 immediately and sound the fire alarm in your building. **Never** use water to put out an electrical fire. It can result in serious electrical shock.

Fireplaces and space heaters



Fireplaces and portable space heaters have to be well maintained and used properly.

- Make sure fireplaces and chimneys are cleaned and inspected regularly. Never dry logs or anything flammable near a fireplace.
- Make sure fires in fireplaces are well attended.
- Place space heaters **at least** three feet away from anything that can burn, including furniture, people, pets and window coverings.
- Turn off space heaters before leaving the room or going to sleep.
- When a portable space heater is in use, supervise children and pets at all times.

Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning

Like fires, carbon monoxide poisoning is also something that can be prevented. CO is a potentially deadly gas. Because it has no colour, odor or taste, people are often unaware of the dangers until it's too late. Following are tips to help prevent CO exposure in your home:

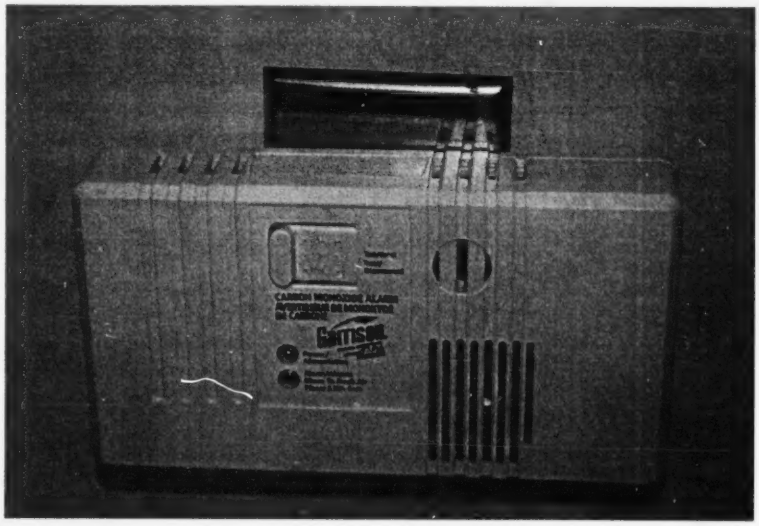
- Have at least one CO alarm near sleeping areas.
- Never use a gas oven, or other gas-fuelled appliance, to heat your home.
- Never use a gas or charcoal grill inside your home.

Symptoms of CO poisoning

Symptoms are similar to the flu: headache, dizziness, nausea and shortness of breath. To tell the difference, get outside into the fresh air. If you feel better and then worse once you go inside again, it could be CO poisoning.

If your CO alarm sounds, check if it's plugged in properly or if the battery is working. If you think CO may be leaking into your home:

- Call the fire department or 911 to report suspected exposure to CO.
- Open windows and doors to ventilate the rooms and leave the home.



Protect your home when you're on a winter vacation

In Manitoba, winter vacations are popular. They give us time to relax and get away from the cold weather. It's also a popular time for criminals to invade empty homes and apartments. However, there are some effective steps you can take to protect your home while you're away.

- Tell the building manager, or a trusted neighbour, when you're leaving and when you'll return. Leave a phone number where you can be reached in an emergency.
- If you have a security alarm, be sure to activate it, and lock all your windows and doors.
- If you have sliding doors, place a metal rod or piece of plywood in the track to prevent an intruder from forcing the door open.
- Look at your rental unit from the outside. Ensure no valuables are visible. If you see them, so can criminals.
- Cancel all deliveries including your mail and newspapers, or arrange to have a neighbour pick them up on a regular basis.

- Use clock timers to activate lights and TVs or radios. It will give the impression that someone is home.
- Store valuables in a safety deposit box.
- Don't leave a message on your answering machine saying you are on vacation.

Need information?

ONLINE
manitoba.ca/rtb

OFFLINE
in person or by phone

Visit your branch office Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Winnipeg at 302–254 Edmonton Street
or call **945-2476**

Brandon at 157–340 9th Street
or call **726-6230**

Thompson at 113–59 Elizabeth Drive
or call **677-6496**

Toll free 1-800-782-8403

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Residential Tenancies Branch
c/o Unit 7 - 1715 St. James Street
Winnipeg, MB R3H 1H3